Advertisement

Southern Economic Journal / Volume 85, Issue 3 / pp. 715-741

Research Article

James M. Buchanan and the Political Economy of Desegregation

Phillip W. Magness, Art Carden, Vincent Geloso

First published: 18 December 2018

https://doi.org/10.1002/soej.12317

PDF

Abstract

Were 1986 Nobel Laureate James M. Buchanan's formative contributions to political economy inspired in significant part by hostility to the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision? Nancy MacLean's 2017 *Democracy in Chains* argues that public choice economics emerged from an opportunistic alliance with Virginia's "Massive Resistance" to school integration and should thus be situated within the racially tinged tradition of southern conservatism. While Buchanan wrote very little on the economics of race, archival evidence and his published works do not support this thesis. Buchanan's work is better understood with reference to his Chicago school mentor Frank Knight and the Italian public finance tradition rather than southern conservatism. To the contrary, we suggest Buchanan believed the competitive processes generated by an educational voucher system would likely undermine rather than rescue the racially segregated status quo. Furthermore, Buchanan's associations and activities suggest that racial hierarchy was not part of his normative vision.

References

This website utilizes technologies such as cookies to enable essential site functionality, as well as for analytics, personalization, and targeted advertising. You may change your settings at any time or accept the default settings. You may close this banner to continue with only essential cookies. Privacy Policy

Manage Preferences

Accept All

Reject Non-Essential

Bass, Jack. 1995. *The transformation of southern politics: Social change and political consequence since 1945*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press.

Google Scholar

Becker, Gary S. 1957. *The Economics of Discrimination*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Google Scholar

Bernstein, David. 2017. Some dubious claims in Nancy MacLean's 'Democracy in Chains.' Washington *Post* Volokh Conspiracy Blog, June 28, 2017. Online: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/volokh-conspiracy/wp/2017/06/28/some-dubious-claims-in-nancy-macleans-democracy-in-chains/?utm_term=.882550c10023. Last accessed November 15, 2017.

Google Scholar

Brennan, Geoffrey, and James M. Buchanan. 1980. *The Power to Tax*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Google Scholar

Buchanan, James M. 1948. "Fiscal equity in a federal state." Doctoral Dissertation, University of Chicago.

Google Scholar

Buchanan, James M. 1949. The pure theory of government finance: A suggested approach. *Journal of Political Economy* **57**(6): 496–505.

Web of Science® | Google Scholar

Buchanan, James M. 1959. Positive economics, welfare economics, and political economy. *Journal of Law and Economics* **2**: 124–38.

Web of Science® | Google Scholar

This website utilizes technologies such as cookies to enable essential site functionality, as well as for analytics, personalization, and targeted advertising. You may change your settings at any time or accept the default settings. You may close this banner to continue with only essential cookies. Privacy Policy

Manage Preferences

Accept All

Reject Non-Essential

Buchanan, James M. 1970. *The Public Finances*. 3rd edition. Homewood, IL: Richard D. Irwin.

Google Scholar

Buchanan, James M. 1969. *Cost and Choice: An inquiry into economic theory*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Google Scholar

Buchanan, James M. 1964. What should economists do. *Southern Economic Journal* **30**: 213–22 Reprinted in v. 1 of *The Collected Works of James Buchanan*, pp. 28–42.

Web of Science® Google Scholar

Buchanan, James M. 1968. Student revolts, academic liberalism, and constitutional attitudes. *Social Research* **35**(4): 666–80.

Web of Science® Google Scholar

Buchanan, James M. 1973. America's Third century in perspective. *Atlantic Economic Journal* **1**: 3–12 Reprinted in v. 19 of *The Collected Works of James Buchanan*, pp. 173–186.

Google Scholar

Buchanan, James M. 1981. Equal treatment and reverse discrimination. In *Social justice*, edited by R. L. Braham. Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer Netherlands, pp. 79–93.

Google Scholar

Buchanan, James M. 1982. Foreword to Frank H. Knight. In *Freedom and Reform: Essays in economics and social philosophy*. Indianapolis: Liberty Press, pp. ix–xiv.

Google Scholar

This website utilizes technologies such as cookies to enable essential site functionality, as well as for analytics, personalization, and targeted advertising. You may change your settings at any time or accept the default settings. You may close this banner to continue with only essential cookies. Privacy Policy

Manage Preferences

Accept All

Reject Non-Essential

Buchanan, James M. 2007. Economics from the Outside. In *"Better than plowing" and beyond*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press.

Google Scholar

Buchanan, James M., and Gordon Tullock. 1962. *The Calculus of Consent*. Ann Harbor MI: University of Michigan Press.

Google Scholar

Buchanan, James M., and Warren J. Samuels. 1975. On some fundamental issues in political economy: an exchange of correspondence. *Journal of Economic Issues* **9**(1): 15–38.

Web of Science® Google Scholar

Carden, Art. 2017-18. Buchanan's big idea: review of Richard Wagner, *James M. Buchanan and liberal political economy: a rational reconstruction*. *Regulation* **40**(4): 61–2.

Google Scholar

Carden, Art 2017. "Democracy in Chains" is the perfect book for the age of trump. The Reasons Will Surprise You. Forbes.com. Online: https://www.forbes.com/sites/artcarden/2017/07/07/democracy-in-chains-is-the-perfect-book-for-the-age-of-trump-but-the-reasons-why-will-surprise-you/#2f6a6c395c2c. Last accessed November 15, 2017.

Google Scholar

Carden, Art, and Phillip W. Magness. 2017. Buchanan the evil genius: Review of Nancy MacLean, *Democracy in Chains: The Deep History of the Radical Right's Stealth Plan for America*. *Regulation* **40**(3): 60–4.

Google Scholar

Carden, Art, Phillip W. Magness, and Vincent Geloso. 2017. "Situating southern influences in the work of James M. Buchanan." Working Paper, available online: SSRN. https://ssrn.com/abstract=3008867

Google Scholar

This website utilizes technologies such as cookies to enable essential site functionality, as well as for analytics, personalization, and targeted advertising. You may change your settings at any time or accept the default settings. You may close this banner to continue with only essential cookies. Privacy Policy

Manage Preferences

Accept All

Reject Non-Essential

Google Scholar

Darity, William A. 2017. The Violence of 'Liberty' in Book Symposium on Nancy MacLean, Policy Trajectories, American Sociological Association. Available online: http://policytrajectories.asa-comparative-historical.org/2017/08/book-symposium-democracy-in-chains/. Last Accessed November 15, 2017.

Google Scholar

Doherty, Brian. 2017. "What Nancy MacLean Gets Wrong About James Buchanan." Reason.com. Available online: http://reason.com/archives/2017/07/20/what-nancy-maclean-gets-wrong-about-jame/. Last Accessed November 15, 2017.

Google Scholar

Egger, John B. 1994. The contributions of W.H. Hutt. *Review of Austrian Economics* **7**(1): 107–38.

Google Scholar

Ely, James W. Jr. 1976. *The Crisis of Conservative Virginia: The Byrd organization and the politics of massive resistance*. Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press.

Google Scholar

Farrant, Andrew, and Vlad Tarko. 2018. James M. Buchanan's 1981 visit to Chile: Knightian democrat or defender of the 'Devil's fix'? *The Review of Austrian Economics* 1–20 (forthcoming).

Google Scholar

Fleury, Jean-Baptiste. 2012. Wandering through the Borderlands of the Social Sciences: Gary Becker's *Economics of Discrimination*. *History of Political Economy* **44**(1): 1–40.

Web of Science® Google Scholar

Fleury, Jean-Baptiste, and Alain Marciano. 2018a. The sound of silence: a review essay of Nancy MacLean's *Democracy in Chains: The Deep History of the Radical Right's Stealth Plan for America*. *Journal of Economic Literature* (forthcoming).

This website utilizes technologies such as cookies to enable essential site functionality, as well as for analytics, personalization, and targeted advertising. You may change your settings at any time or accept the default settings. You may close this banner to continue with only essential cookies. Privacy Policy

Manage Preferences

Accept All

Reject Non-Essential

Friedman, Milton. 1955. The role of government in education. In *Economics and the public interest*, edited by R. A. Solo. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, pp. 123–44.

Google Scholar

Friedman, Milton. 1962. *Capitalism and freedom*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Google Scholar

Gates, Robbins L. 1962. *The making of Massive Resistance Virginia: the politics of public school desegregation, 1954–1956*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.

Google Scholar

Gross, Ariela. 2018. A grassroots history of colorblind conservative constitutionalism. *Law & Social Inquiry* **43**(Winter): 1.

Google Scholar

Hershman, James H. 1978. "The opponents of Virginia's massive resistance." Doctoral Dissertation, University of Virginia.

Google Scholar

Hershman, James H. 1998. Massive resistance meets its match: the emergence of a pro-public school majority. In *The Moderates' Dilemma: massive resistance to school desegregation in Virginia*, edited by Lassiter and Lewis. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, pp. 104–33.

Google Scholar

Hilts, Philip J. 1973. The saga of James J. Kilpatrick. *Potomac*, September 16 **69**(72): 12–5.

Google Scholar

Hirschman, Albert O. 1970. *Exit, voice, and loyalty: responses to decline in firms, organizations, and states*

This website utilizes technologies such as cookies to enable essential site functionality, as well as for analytics, personalization, and targeted advertising. You may change your settings at any time or accept the default settings. You may close this banner to continue with only essential cookies. Privacy Policy

Manage Preferences

Accept All

Reject Non-Essential

Hustwit, William P. 2013. *James J. Kilpatrick: salesman for segregation*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.

Google Scholar

Hutt, William Harold. 1964. *Economics of the Colour Bar*. London: Merritt & Hatcher.

Google Scholar

Hutt, William Harold. 1966a. Unanimity versus non-discrimination (as criteria for constitutional validity). *South African Journal of Economics* **34**(2): 133–47.

Google Scholar

Hutt, William Harold. 1966b. Civil rights and young conservatives. *Modern Age* **10**(3): 231–9.

Google Scholar

Knight, Frank H. 1939. Ethics and economic reform. III. Christianity. *Economica* **6**(24): 398–422.

Google Scholar

Knight, Frank H. 1941. The meaning of democracy: its politico-economic structure and ideals. *Journal of Negro Education* **10**(3): 218–332.

Google Scholar

Knight, Frank H. 1960. *Intelligence and Democratic Action*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Google Scholar

M. D. Lassiter, and A. B. Lewis, eds. 1998. *The Moderates' Dilemma: massive resistance to school desegregation in Virginia*. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press.

This website utilizes technologies such as cookies to enable essential site functionality, as well as for analytics, personalization, and targeted advertising. You may change your settings at any time or accept the default settings. You may close this banner to continue with only essential cookies. Privacy Policy

Manage Preferences

Accept All

Reject Non-Essential

Google Scholar

Magness, Phillip W. 2017. A note on Democracy in Chains. *Modern Age* **59**(4): 91–5.

Google Scholar

Manhattan Institute. 1983. W.H. Hutt: an economist for this century. *Manhattan Report* **3**(5): 1–11.

Google Scholar

Mitchell, Broadus. 1961. Review of Frank H. Knight, intelligence and democratic action. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* **333**(1): 185.

Web of Science® Google Scholar

Moreton, Bethany. 2017. Kochonomics: the racist roots of public choice theory. *Boston Review, August*: 10.

Google Scholar

Munger, Michael C. 2018. On the origins and goals of public choice: constitutional conspiracy. *Independent Review* **22**(3): 359–82.

Web of Science® Google Scholar

Nutter, G. Warren. 1969. Economic aspects of freedom. In *Liberty under Law, Anarchy, Totalitarianism*. American Bar Association, Standing Committee on Education About Communism.

Google Scholar

Nutter, G. Warren and James M. Buchanan. 1959. "The economics of universal education." Thomas Jefferson Center for Political Economy, University of Virginia.

Google Scholar

This website utilizes technologies such as cookies to enable essential site functionality, as well as for analytics, personalization, and targeted advertising. You may change your settings at any time or accept the default settings. You may close this banner to continue with only essential cookies. Privacy Policy

Manage Preferences

Accept All

Reject Non-Essential

Rae, Douglas W. 1975. The limits of consensual decision. *American Political Science Review* **69**(4): 1270–94.

Web of Science® | Google Scholar

Rasche, Pamela J. 1977. "Leon Dure and the Freedom of Association." Master's Thesis, University of Virginia.

Google Scholar

Ravitch, Diane. 2017. Big money rules. *New York Review of Books* **64**(19).

Google Scholar

Roberts, Gene, and Hank Klibanoff. 2008. *The Race Beat: the press, the civil rights struggle, and the awakening of a nation*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.

Google Scholar

Rothbard, Murray N. 1988. William Harold Hutt, in Memoriam. *Newsletter of the Mont Pelerin Society (June-December)*: 33.

Google Scholar

Slobodian, Quinn. 2018. *Globalists: the end of empire and the birth of Neoliberalism*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Google Scholar

Stewart, James B. 2018. "The far right's toxic forbears." History News Network, February 26. Available online: https://historynewsnetwork.org/article/168129. Last accessed February 27, 2018.

Google Scholar

Stubblebine, W. Craig. 1965. Institutional elements in the financing of education. *Southern Economic Journal* **32**(1): 15–34.

This website utilizes technologies such as cookies to enable essential site functionality, as well as for analytics, personalization, and targeted advertising. You may change your settings at any time or accept the default settings. You may close this banner to continue with only essential cookies. Privacy Policy

Manage Preferences

Accept All

Reject Non-Essential

Temin, Peter. 2018. *The Vanishing Middle Class: prejudice and power in a dual economy*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Google Scholar

Thomas Jefferson Center for Political Economy. 1965. Report on the Virginia Plan for Universal Education. *Occasional Paper No.*: 2.

Google Scholar

Tullock, Gordon. 1967. The welfare costs of tariffs, monopolies, and theft. *Western Economic Journal* **5**(3): 224–32.

Web of Science® Google Scholar

Tullock, Gordon. 1975. Comment on Rae's 'The Limits of Consensual Decision'. *American Political Science Review* **69**(4): 1295–7.

Web of Science® Google Scholar

Tullock, Gordon. 1981. The rhetoric and reality of redistribution. *Southern Economic Journal* **47**(4): 895–907.

Web of Science® Google Scholar

Wagner, Richard. 2017. *James M. Buchanan and liberal political economy: A rational reconstruction*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

Google Scholar

Wicksell, Knut. 1896 [1958]. A new principle of just taxation (James M. Buchanan) (Trans.) Trans. In *Classics in the Theory of Public Finance*, edited by R. A. Musgrave and A. T. Peacock. London: MacMillan.

Google Scholar

Williams, Robert F. 1964. Hardly a surprise. *Virginia Journal of Education* Volume **58**(3): 11–12

This website utilizes technologies such as cookies to enable essential site functionality, as well as for analytics, personalization, and targeted advertising. You may change your settings at any time or accept the default settings. You may close this banner to continue with only essential cookies. Privacy Policy

Manage Preferences

Accept All

Reject Non-Essential

Download PDF

ABOUT WILEY ONLINE LIBRARY

Privacy Policy
Terms of Use
About Cookies
Manage Cookies
Accessibility
Wiley Research DE&I Statement and Publishing Policies

HELP & SUPPORT

Contact Us
Training and Support
DMCA & Reporting Piracy
Sitemap

OPPORTUNITIES

Subscription Agents
Advertisers & Corporate Partners

CONNECT WITH WILEY

The Wiley Network
Wiley Press Room

Copyright © 1999-2026 John Wiley & Sons, Inc or related companies. All rights reserved, including rights for text and data mining and training of artificial intelligence technologies or similar technologies.

WILEY

This website utilizes technologies such as cookies to enable essential site functionality, as well as for analytics, personalization, and targeted advertising. You may change your settings at any time or accept the default settings. You may close this banner to continue with only essential cookies. Privacy Policy

Manage Preferences

Accept All

Reject Non-Essential